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TAGS: PREL SF AO  
SUBJECT: ZUMA'S FIRST STATE VISIT INTENDS TO IMPROVE  
RELATIONS WITH ANGOLA

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Madeline Q. Seidenstricker.  
Reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

¶11. (C) Summary: South African President Jacob Zuma made a strategic choice to go to Angola for his first state visit August 19-21. At the top of Zuma's agenda were economics and cooperation on regional issues. The bilateral relationship suffered due to personal conflicts between former South African President Thabo Mbeki and Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos. Zuma's more congenial, less ideological disposition presents an opportunity for a closer bilateral relationship. Both sides appeared to treat the visit with utmost importance and observers are lauding its success. End summary.

¶12. (C) In his address to the Angolan National Assembly, Zuma appealed to Angolans on the basis of historical ties. He thanked the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FAPLA) specifically for their assistance to the African National Congress in fighting the apartheid government. He said, "The South African democratic victory in 1994 was a victory of the Angolan people" and also expressed appreciation to the Russians and Cubans for their support. As described by Institute for Security Studies analyst Paula Roque, "Zuma knows how to engage Luanda." In addition to giving thanks for liberation era support, this included a high profile delegation of 11 ministers and over 150 business representatives, which Zuma repeatedly pointed out was the largest business delegation ever to attend a State visit by a South African president since 1994.

¶13. (U) Zuma emphasized that the improved relations between South Africa and Angola would "change the economic landscape of Southern Africa." Addressing the South Africa-Angola Business Forum, Zuma discussed the establishment of a Presidential Bi-National Commission that would facilitate cooperation in various areas, including trade and industry, mining and energy, defense and security, immigration, tourism, communication, science and technology, banking, agriculture and transportation. He mentioned South African private sector interests in Angola's reconstruction and other sectors. He also looked towards new business opportunities for South African companies in agricultural field and information technology and eradication of landmines, for example. Zuma mentioned resurrecting regional economic integration.

¶14. (C) Zuma highlighted the need "to forge a common position on regional, continental and international issues that will benefit our countries and the continent at large," including regional crises such as Zimbabwe, Madagascar and Sudan. Roque pointed out that Angola is the second largest contributor after South Africa to the Southern Africa Development Community brigade standby force. She said South Africa would like to see Angola become a major contributor to peacekeeping missions in the region. Zuma also seeks a unified front to push forward reform of multilateral institutions such as the UN Security Council, G8 and international financial institutions. He stressed the

importance of Angola and South Africa standing together at international fora, including the World Trade Organization, World Economic Forum and Non-Aligned Movement.

¶5. (C) Comment: Roque emphasized that differences between South Africa and Angola on questions of democracy will continue to be problematic for the bilateral relationship. She said, "Zuma won't risk annoying Luanda on elections and democracy." Moreover, she thinks that while Angolans recognize some benefits to having South Africa's support on continental issues, they view Luanda's willingness to forge stronger economic relations as a "favor" to South Africa. End comment.

¶6. (U) Embassy Luanda cleared on this cable.

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